



Port Security Advisory (2-06)

There are several areas in the world where acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships are prevalent. In February 2006, the Coast Guard published Maritime Security (MARSEC) Directive 104-6, Guidelines for U.S. Vessels Operating in High Risk Waters and may prescribe additional security measures for U.S. flagged vessels to respond to security threats. The MARSEC directive applies to U.S. flagged vessels on international voyages in certain areas.

For vessels to which MARSEC Directive 104-6 does not apply, the Coast Guard recommends that those vessels increase their security level while transiting or operating in areas where acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea are prevalent. The following security measures extracted from International Maritime Organization (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) Circular 623/Revision 3 entitled "Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships" should also be considered:

- (1) Prior to entering high risk areas, bridge watches should be augmented. Additional watches on the stern or at other locations on the vessel to cover radar "blind spots" should be considered. Radars should be manned in a manner which assures detection of any water craft attempting to approach the vessel. In good visibility, the bridge watch should be augmented with appropriate visual lookout capabilities to maximize detection of approaching watercraft;
- (2) All doors allowing access to restricted areas (i.e. bridge, engine room, steering gear compartments, officer's cabins and crew accommodations) should be secured, controlled, and regularly inspected. Securing doors providing access to, and egress from, secure or key areas may give rise to concern over safety in the event of an accident. In any instance where there is a conflict between safety and security, the safety requirements should be paramount;
- (3) Establish a constant radio watch with the appropriate shore or naval authorities when in high risk areas;
- (4) Vessels should use the maximum lighting available consistent with safe navigation, having regard in particular to the provisions of Rule 20(b) of the 1972 Collision Regulations. Bow and overboard lights should be left on if it can be done without endangering navigation. Vessels should not keep deck lights on when underway, as it may lead other ships to assume the vessel is at anchor. Wide beam flood lights can be used to illuminate the area astern of the vessel. Signal projector lights can be used systematically to probe for suspect craft using radar guidance if possible;
- (5) Alarm/distress signals, including the ship's whistle, should be sounded in the approach of attackers to discourage them. Distress flares should only be used when the master considers that the attackers' actions are putting the vessel in



imminent danger;

- (6) Provided that navigation safety allows, masters should consider using heavy wheel movements to “ride off” attacking craft as they approach. The effect of bow wave and wash may deter would-be attackers and make it difficult for them to attach poles or grappling irons to the ship;
- (7) The use of water hoses should also be considered to ward off attackers. Water pressures of 80 psi and higher have been used to deter and repulse attackers. A number of spare fire hoses can be rigged, tied down and pressurized to enable use at short notice if a potential attack is detected.
- (8) While a vessel is at anchor or in port of a high risk area, vessel owners/operators should increase the security level for the duration of operations within these waters. In addition, all deck lighting should be illuminated at night. Prior to leaving port, the ship should be thoroughly searched and all doors or access points secured or controlled.

Maintained vigilance is essential. Advance warning of a possible attack will give the opportunity to sound alarms, alert other ships and the coastal authorities, illuminate the suspect craft, undertake evasive maneuvering or initiate other response procedures.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Commercial Crime Services web site ([http:// www.icc-ccs.org/prc/piracyreport.php](http://www.icc-ccs.org/prc/piracyreport.php)) contains valuable information regarding current piracy threats throughout the world. The ICC also provides historical data which details the specific locations of reported acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea over the past several years. Vessels operating in or transiting these high risk waters should consider implementing additional security measures to safeguard the safety of vessels and their crews.

MSC Circular 623/3 provides additional procedures to those listed above for vessels encountering suspicious or threatening movements which may result in piracy or armed robbery at sea. Owners/Operators of vessels which operate on international voyages should become familiar with this circular and incorporate all applicable security measures into their Vessel Security Plans. The use of the Ship Security Alert System and any other available emergency means of communication should be used to contact the flag administration in all instances when attacks occur, regardless of the attack location or duration.

The conditions of entry applicable to vessels outlined in Port Security Advisory 01-06 remain in effect.

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